(b) if so, the steps taken to provide quality product at reasonable rates to consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The prices of vegetables and fruits at Mother Dairy outlets in Delhi are competitive with prevailing market rates.

(b) Question does not arise in view of (a) above.

National institute for research and development of tropical fruits

†195. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether keeping in view the need of research and development in the field of tropical fruits, any national institute is being established;

(b) whether some places in Uttaranchal were considered for the said research institute;

(c) if so, whether the then Minister of Agriculture had given an assurance for opening one centre of the said institute in Uttaranchal; and

(d) if so, the details of action being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Uttaranchal is primarily a region of temperate climate, with pockets of sub-tropical climate in a few places. Research on temperate fruits is already being conducted by the Central Institute for Temperate Horticulture, Srinagar and for Sub-tropical by the Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar and Central Institute for Sub-tropical Horticulture, Lucknow.

Assistance to pig farming scheme of Chhattisgarh

†196. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal during

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

August-September, 2003 for a pig farming scheme for the female beneficiaries in order to improve the financial condition of the families belonging to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes in the naxalite infested regions of Chhattisgarh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the required funds would be granted to the State Government for this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The proposal was received during the month of September, 2003 and a reply was sent to Government of Chhattisgarh on 4th September, 2003 indicating inability to consider the proposal due to non-continuation of Piggery Scheme during tenth Five Year Plan.

Suicides by farmers in Karnataka

197. SHRI VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that instances of farmers' suicides have of late recorded a steep increase in Karnataka particularly in Hassan district since April, 2003;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Karnataka Government has failed to settle the crop insurance claims in time which forced the farmers to approach the money lenders;

(d) the other reasons for such an abnormal increase in the incidents of suicides in Karnataka; and

(e) the action proposed to be taken by the Central Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The figures reported by the Government of Karnataka regarding suicide in the State and Hassan district are given in the Table below: